

Remarks

Independent Claims 1 and 22 have been amended to emphasize the key element of this invention, namely display areas being “disposed at as hour demarcation points”.

The Examiner has rightly identified a patent reference (Saurer, U.S. Patent No. 4,488,818) that would be very useful to the Applicant’s invention, but clearly solves a different problem.

Saurer treats the time display hands and the digital display elements behind those hands as two separate and unrelated entities. The uniqueness of the Applicant’s invention is to combine these disparate functions into a novel interaction. Each and every display area now has an integral relationship with the hands and their hourly position. Prior art references do not contain any suggestion that they be combined in this manner. This combination of functions not only simplifies the design, but leads to novel uses as described in the Applicant’s dependant claims. The Examiner has not presented a convincing line of reasoning as to why the claimed concept as a whole would have been obvious.

Furthermore, Saurer presents a design that does not anticipate this new invention.

As shown in Applicant’s Figure 4, display areas are placed at increments of 30-degrees of angle. This is crucial to the aesthetic appearance of a traditional analog timepiece. Saurer shows either fixed symbols (items 12 and 22 of his Fig 1) or seven-segmented elements (item 11 of his Fig 1). The seven-segmented elements would pertain to the multi-function displays of Applicant’s invention. Saurer however shows these elements on an X/Y grid that does not lend itself to accurate 30-degree placement. Furthermore, the six digits shown are not centered at the 6:00 point, but simply run along the bottom (with one odd digit being centered). Saurer in no way shows or implies that these seven-segmented elements be placed as hour demarcation points. The Examiner has extended a strained interpretation of the Saurer reference that could be made only in hindsight.

Concerning the graphic screen icons of claim 22, it is the structure of these icons that is claimed. Obviously, a computer screen is physically capable of displaying any image or symbol. What is not obvious, and has not been implemented to date, is the Applicant's unique orientation of dynamically changing hour demarcation points and the associated control means.

Even should the prior art (Saurer's or a graphic screen) have been physically capable of positioning these display elements at 30-degree increments, the Applicant's invention is a new principal of operation. The concept of altering all hour demarcation points in an arbitrary manner goes against the long history of timekeeping devices. It is counter intuitive. What may have been an inherent possibility has not been appreciated by those skilled in the art. This synergy is greater than the sum of its parts.

Conclusion

With due consideration of these arguments and minor amendments the Applicant requests re-evaluation of the submitted invention in whole, for allowance. The Examiner has very thoroughly explored prior art references, and it is the Applicants belief that these amendments clarify the intent of this invention without changing the scope to a point that new investigations are required.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED



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